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**Report on the Bursary and Internship Programme of  
the Namibian Chamber of Environment (NCE)  
from 2018 to 2023**

**November 2023**

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## OVERVIEW

The Bursary and Internship Programme was established in 2018 by the Namibian Chamber of Environment (NCE) to support Namibian post-graduate students in the broad environment sector. The programme has grown in the number of students supported each year and the amount invested in student support. It is the only means of support for post-graduate students from low-income backgrounds studying in the environment sector.

Two reports are produced each year (<https://n-c-e.org/nce-bursary-fund>). The first, at the beginning of the year, provides information on the students being supported that academic year. The second, at the end of the year, reports on the student’s progress and results.

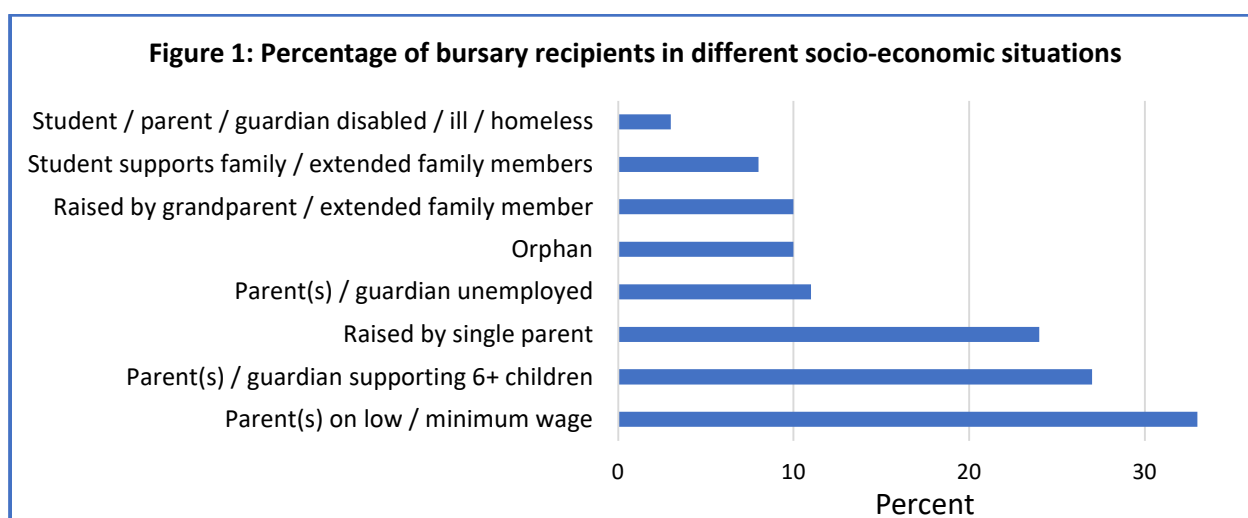
This is an additional report summarising the data to date and providing an overview of the Bursary Programme since its inception in 2018.

Funds to support bursaries and internships are raised from the corporate and business sector in Namibia, and from foundations overseas. The amount of funds raised and invested in bursaries and internships is shown in Table 1 below. All funds raised for bursaries are used for this purpose – there are no overheads or management fees, as the core costs of the NCE are fully covered from other sources.

Year	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Funds (N\$) spent on bursaries & internships	688,432	1,095,586	1,084,266	1,324,916	1,464,324	1,556,957

The following aspects of the NCE Bursary Fund are pertinent:

- All students supported come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Some are orphans, some have only one parent (usually a mother) and all have no surplus resources to support their children’s studies. Indeed, many of the bursary holders have part-time jobs to help support their families (Figure 1).



**Note** – the percentages add up to more than 100 because some students fall into more than one category, e.g. raised by single parent and 6+ children being supported.

- Despite the difficult conditions under which they grew up, all bursary holders are high achievers with above average grades at the end of their primary or Honours degrees. Because of their poor schooling background, many of the students struggled in their first years of university, and then got better and better. They are all intelligent, hard-working, committed, and realise that education is their ticket to a better life – for them and their families. It is from the pool of students such as these that many of the next generation of leaders in Namibia will emerge.
- Many of the students live under challenging conditions, in the informal settlement areas with limited access to water, no proper sanitation, no grid / mains electricity for lighting and little peace and quiet to facilitate studying. Despite all these challenges, we **have not had a single student fail** – indeed, most have excelled. This speaks to the commitment and resolve of these students to use the opportunity afforded by these bursaries to make a difference to their lives.
- There are few other funding options to support post-graduate students in the environmental (and most other) sectors. The Namibia Students Financial Assistance Fund (NSFAF), a parastatal body established under the Ministry of Education, is in disarray. It currently provides support to mainly undergraduate students. Since the establishment of the NCE's Bursary Fund six years ago, the Fund has provided 181 bursaries to over 100 post-graduate students studying in the conservation and environment sector. Bursaries are awarded on an annual basis. Most Masters courses are two years, and Doctoral courses at least three years. Preference is given to existing bursary recipients for the completion of their degree courses, which explains why there are more bursaries awarded than students.
- Over the life of the Bursary Fund, 63% of bursary recipients have been women. This has not been intentional; women have simply emerged as better candidates against the bursary selection criteria. We are happy with this outcome as (i) women are under-represented in the environment sector workplace, particularly at management level, and (ii) well educated women in leadership positions are good not only for the environment sector, but for families and society in general.
- The Bursary Fund, formally registered as the Training and Bursary Trust Fund of Namibia with the Master of the High Court, is governed by an independent board of Trustees and administered by the NCE. Oversight is thus provided by both boards. This is to ensure high standards of governance and transparency, and strong networks with academia, private sector and civil society. The six Trustees are:
  - Mrs Edla Kaveru (Chairperson): *Director Operations & Finances, Namibia Nature Foundation*
  - Dr Anna Matros-Goreses: *Executive Director Research, Innovation and Partnerships, NUST*
  - Ms Lavinia N. Shikongo: *General Manager IntraHealth Namibia, former UNDP Assistant Resident Representative*
  - Mr Uda Nakamhela, LL.M: *Nakamhela Attorneys, Windhoek*
  - Mr Ignasius /Awaseb: *Manager Corporate Social Investment, B2Gold Namibia*
  - Dr Chris Brown: *CEO Namibian Chamber of Environment*
- We hold the view that education and good mentorship creates a foundation for good environmental management, conservation and the wise use of Namibia's natural resources to help develop the country in a sustainable manner. Graduates with strong technical and life skills are sorely needed in government agencies, academia, the private sector and non-governmental organisations. The Bursary programme is making a significant contribution to that ideal.

## ABOUT THE NAMIBIAN CHAMBER OF ENVIRONMENT

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The Namibian Chamber of Environment (NCE) is a membership-based non-governmental organisation established as a Voluntary Association and body corporate separate from its Members (*universitas personarum*) under Namibian Common Law. Its Members constitute the “Council”, which is the highest decision-making organ of the NCE. The Council elects Members and independent specialists to serve on an Executive Committee at each AGM. The Executive Committee has all the necessary power to oversee and give strategic direction to the Chamber between AGMs.

The NCE currently has a membership of 76 environmental NGOs and national programme coordinators, comprising 63 full members (registered Namibian NGOs) and 13 associate members (non-Namibian organisations and individuals).

The NCE is headed by a Chief Executive Officer and an Office Manager. All other support is contracted as needed. The NCE is deliberately kept mean-and-lean to keep overhead costs down so that funds go into projects with tangible outputs. Further, the NCE does not implement projects in the field unless specifically requested by a majority of its members to do so on a short-term basis. This is to ensure that the NCE does not compete with members. The NCE’s focus is to support its members, to facilitate collaboration between them and to help create the right conditions for the NCE and its members to have the greatest impact with the resources at their disposal. If longer term implementation is required and there is no organisation to take on the role, then the NCE helps establish a new organisation. Examples are Development Workshop Namibia, Namibian Foundation for the Conservation of Seabirds (NAMCOB), Namibian Civil Society Non-State Actors Network (NamNet), and this Bursary Fund.

The core operating costs of the NCE are covered by B2Gold Namibia. This includes (a) salaries for the CEO and Office Manager and (b) office running costs, which currently amount to about N\$750,000 per year. All other income, donations, grants, sponsorship, and corporate social investment (CSI) goes directly to projects. There are thus no overheads or management costs involved.

In line with the recommendations of the King IV Report on Corporate Governance, funds for projects, such as the Bursary programme, are typically drawn from a number of contributors.

NCE’s Objectives are implemented through eight strategic programme areas as follows:

- ❖ Support to Members
- ❖ Advocacy
- ❖ National Facilitation
- ❖ Environmental Information
- ❖ **Training and Mentorship of Young Namibians**
- ❖ Environmental Policy Research
- ❖ Fund Raising
- ❖ Grant Making

The NCE's Objectives as set out in its Constitution, are as follows:

#### Aspirational objectives:

- Conserve the natural environment
- Protect indigenous biodiversity and endangered species
- Promote best environmental practices, including habitat rehabilitation
- Support efforts to prevent and reduce environmental degradation and pollution

#### Operational objectives:

- Represent the environmental interests of members
- Act as a consultative forum for its Members
- Engage with policy and law makers to improve the environmental policy setting in Namibia, as well as effective policy implementation
- **Build environmental skills in young Namibians**
- Support and advise Members on environmental matters and best practices, and facilitate access to environmental information

For more details please visit the NCE website at [www.n-c-e.org](http://www.n-c-e.org)

## BACKGROUND ON THE BURSARY FUND

One of the operational objectives and a strategic programme area of the Namibian Chamber of Environment is to build environmental skills in young Namibians through training and mentorship. The bursary and internship programmes for young men and women with a keen interest to serve in the environmental and related socio-economic sectors gives validation to what NCE stands for and contributes towards youth empowerment.

The Bursary and Internship programme was initiated in the last quarter of 2017 for implementation in the 2018 academic year. The programme provides financial support to outstanding young men and women who have chosen to study for a career in the fields of environment and sustainable development. Priority is given to disciplines of study such as conservation biology, biodiversity, wildlife, forestry, agriculture, water and fisheries as they are the core aspects of the environment. The bursary is however not limited to conventional fields but also support students studying environmental engineering, environmental law, and social, financial, economic and business studies linked to natural resources, environment and sustainable development.

In 2019, a separate Bursary and Training Trust was registered with the Master of the High Court, under a separate board of Trustees, with administrative services provided by the NCE. The growing demand for financial support to students, and the persistent failure of the Namibia Students Financial Assistance Fund (NSFAF – a state-owned enterprise) to provide adequate and

efficient funding, especially at post-graduate levels, highlights the need for civil society and the private sector to scale up bursary funding and related support to students.

NCE prepares two reports annually for transparency and accountability purposes. The reports are provided to the NCE and Bursary Fund boards, to NCE Members and colleagues in the sector, to sponsors and the general public via the NCE website, Facebook and media releases. The first report is produced at the beginning of the academic year and lists the students who have been awarded bursaries for that upcoming academic year, their fields of study, universities selected and other relevant information. The second report is produced at the end of the academic year (December / January) and reports on how the students have performed during the year, in both their academic studies and internships.

This report presents an overview of the programme since its inception and bring the reader up to our preparations for the 2024 academic year.

### Bursary programme outreach

At the end of September, the NCE bursary fund for the following academic year is announced via an advertisement in national newspapers, on notice boards at local universities and on social media, e.g. NCE website and Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/namchamberofenvironment>. These Facebook announcements receive over 80 primary shares to other social media platforms and then further dissemination. This public outreach approach attracts a growing number of applications each year. Deadline for applications is about mid-October, as this gives the applicants the opportunity to get provisional acceptance letters from academic institutions to which they have applied, and for the selection process to be completed before the Christmas break, so that both successful and unsuccessful students are aware of the results of their applications and can plan accordingly.

 <p><b>Requirements:</b></p> <p>Applicants must be Namibian citizens.</p> <p>Applicants must have completed at least a primary degree and preferably an honors degree or equivalent.</p> <p>Applicants must be accepted, or have applied as full, part-time or distance students at an accredited university in the SADC region. Students wishing to study outside the SADC region may be supported at a similar financial level of those studying in the sub-region - the onus will be on the applicant to raise additional funds.</p> <p>Preference will be given to students who come from disadvantaged backgrounds.</p>	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Bursaries Offered</h2> <p>The Namibian Chamber of Environment (NCE) is a membership-based umbrella organisation currently representing 74 environmental NGOs and national programmes. One of the eight NCE strategic programme areas focusses on skills development and mentorship of young Namibians. The NCE has set up a bursary programme to support motivated postgraduate students in a broad range of environment disciplines. In 2023 the NCE supported 42 students with bursaries and 6 with internships.</p> <p>The NCE is offering a similar number of <b>bursaries</b> for the <b>2024 academic year</b> to individuals who wish to further their studies in the fields of conservation, environment, and sustainable development. Interested applicants should submit a completed application form, a concise motivational letter explaining why they should be one of the selected candidates and provide the required supporting documents. The application form and list of required documents are on the NCE website at <a href="http://www.n-c-e.org/nce-bursary-fund">http://www.n-c-e.org/nce-bursary-fund</a>. Applications should reach the NCE at <a href="mailto:admin@n-c-e.org">admin@n-c-e.org</a> on or before <b>13 October 2023</b>.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">For any queries, please contact us at 061 240 140</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>No late applications will be considered</b></p> 
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## Application submission and approval

Applicants submit a completed application form (downloaded from the NCE website here <https://n-c-e.org/nce-bursary-fund>), a covering letter, a transcript of their university results to date, a letter of acceptance (or provisional acceptance) from their intended tertiary institution of study, proof of Namibian citizenship (e.g. their identity document) and any other supporting documentation. Submission is done usually via email but hard copy may also be delivery to the NCE office.

A multilevel screening process is done on all applicants to determine if they meet the eligibility criteria. Applicants are assessed and scored using the following criteria:

- ✓ Namibian citizen
- ✓ appropriate field of study
- ✓ academic achievements to date
- ✓ financial need
- ✓ evidence of commitment and passion for the sector
- ✓ leadership potential
- ✓ longer-term goals and plans

Top rated candidates are placed on a short-list. An interview is held with each short-listed candidate to *inter alia* clarify and confirm the information they provided in their application, get a more complete understanding of their financial needs, discuss their study objectives, choice of university, projects (and where appropriate to discuss internships and mentoring), their longer-term ambitions, and to work through their budget. Based on these meetings, the final list of successful applicants is prepared, budgets confirmed and offers made. Under COVID-19 conditions, most interviews were telephonic. Post-COVID, they are both in-person and telephonic for students outside Windhoek.

An agreement is prepared, personalised to each successful applicant, and the conditions of the agreement are explained and discussed prior to signing. Academic fees are paid directly to each academic institution, referencing the student's name and university number. The student is provided with a letter of commitment for the bursary and proof of payment of their academic fees, for when they register at the start of the academic year. Payment for accommodation, transport and other items of support are made in tranches through the academic year to the student's personal bank accounts. Students are obliged to report back on their academic progress throughout the year, to notify the NCE if they receive additional bursary support and to inform us immediately if anything should arise (including personal issues) that may impact on the successful completion of their studies.

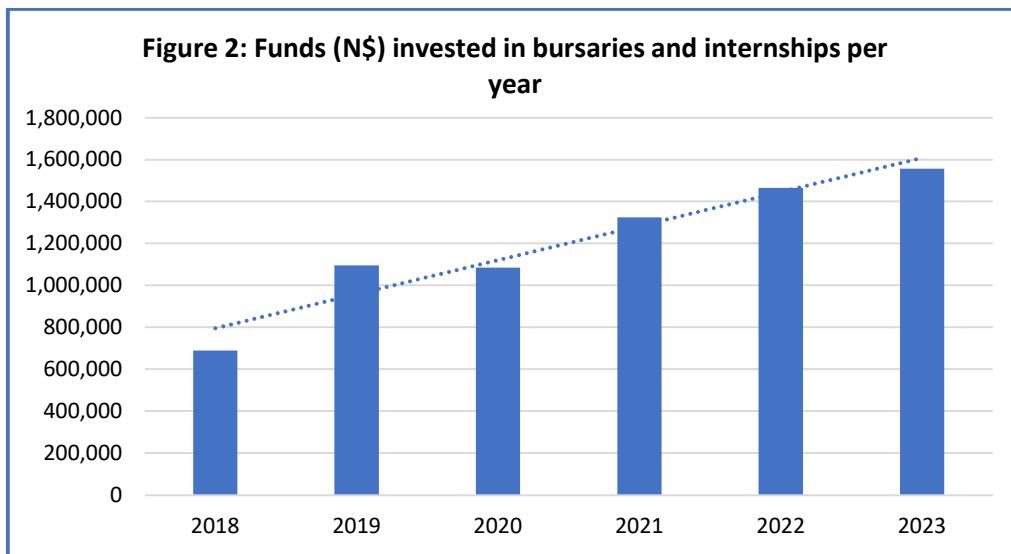
## GROWTH OF THE BURSARY FUND

2024 will be the seventh year of operation for the Bursary Fund. The growth of the fund, in terms of resources allocated, student applications received, and bursaries provided, is shown in Table 2.

Existing bursary holders going into their second year of study (most Masters courses run over two years, Doctoral courses over three or four years) receive preferential support providing they have passed their courses and/or made adequate progress on their thesis work. About 64% of bursary recipients are supported for two or three years.

<b>Table 2: Funds spent, number of applicants and number of recipients under the bursary and internship programme</b>							
	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>
Funds (N\$) invested	688,432	1,095,586	1,084,266	1,324,916	1,464,324	1,556,957	
No. applicants	49	108	133	161	256	244	285
No. Students supported	13	22	30	34	40	42	
No. internships	9	11	7	10	5	6	

The Bursary Fund has invested N\$7.2 million in bursaries and internships over the past six years, ranging from N\$0.688 million in the first year to N\$1.56 million in 2023 (Figure 2).



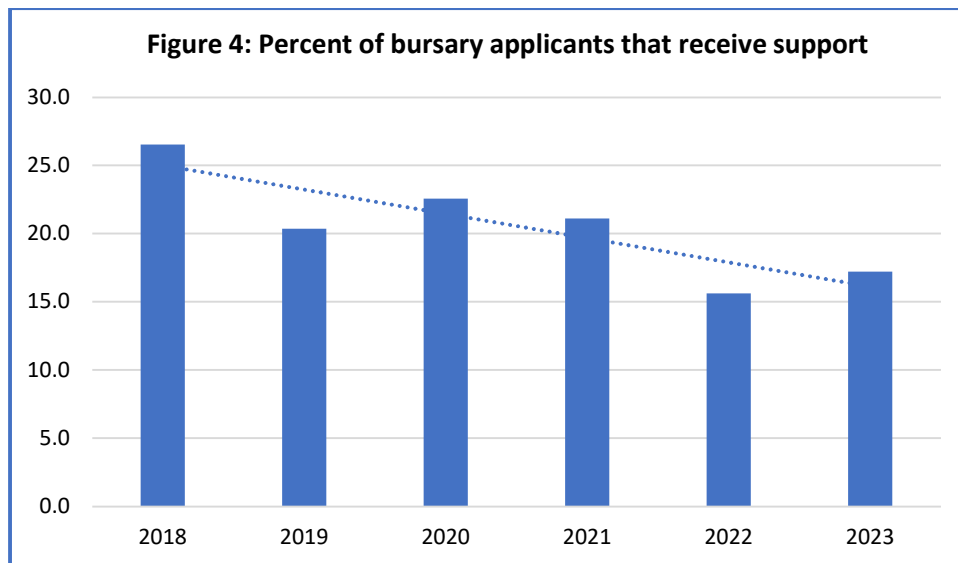
Ten donors have contributed to the Bursary Funds since its inception (Figure 3). Key early donors include B2Gold Namibia, the Woodtiger Fund, TotalEnergies and Bannerman Resources. Their confidence in the NCE and the Bursary programme has enabled the NCE to attract further funding from corporate donors in Namibia, and to have a significant impact on the lives of many young Namibians.

**Figure 3: Donors to the Bursary Fund since its inception in 2018**



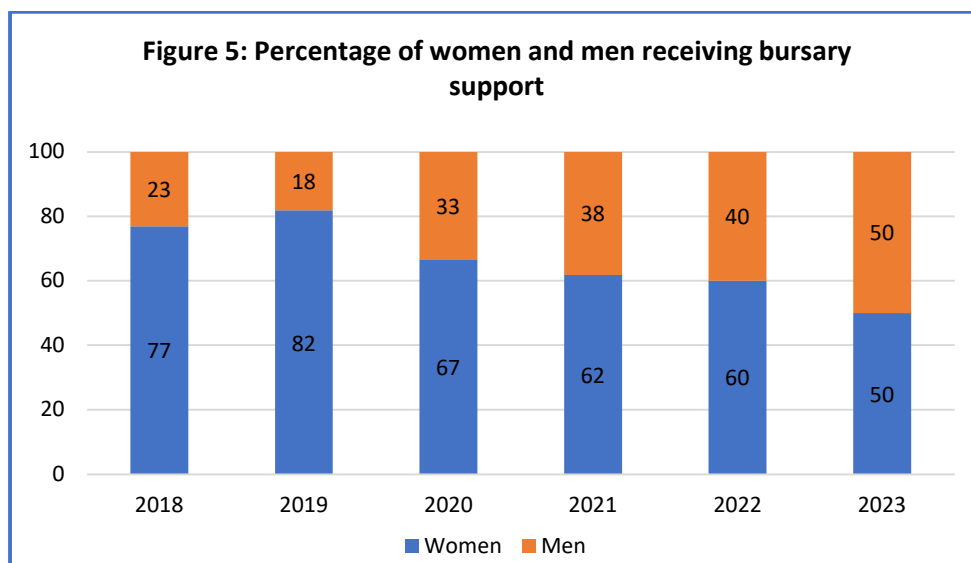


The percentage of bursary applicants that have been awarded bursary support over the life of the Fund is 19%, ranging from 15.6% to 26.5% (Figure 4). Despite the increase in funding, the percentage of successful applicants has declined over the years because the number of applicants have increased, resulting in greater competition.

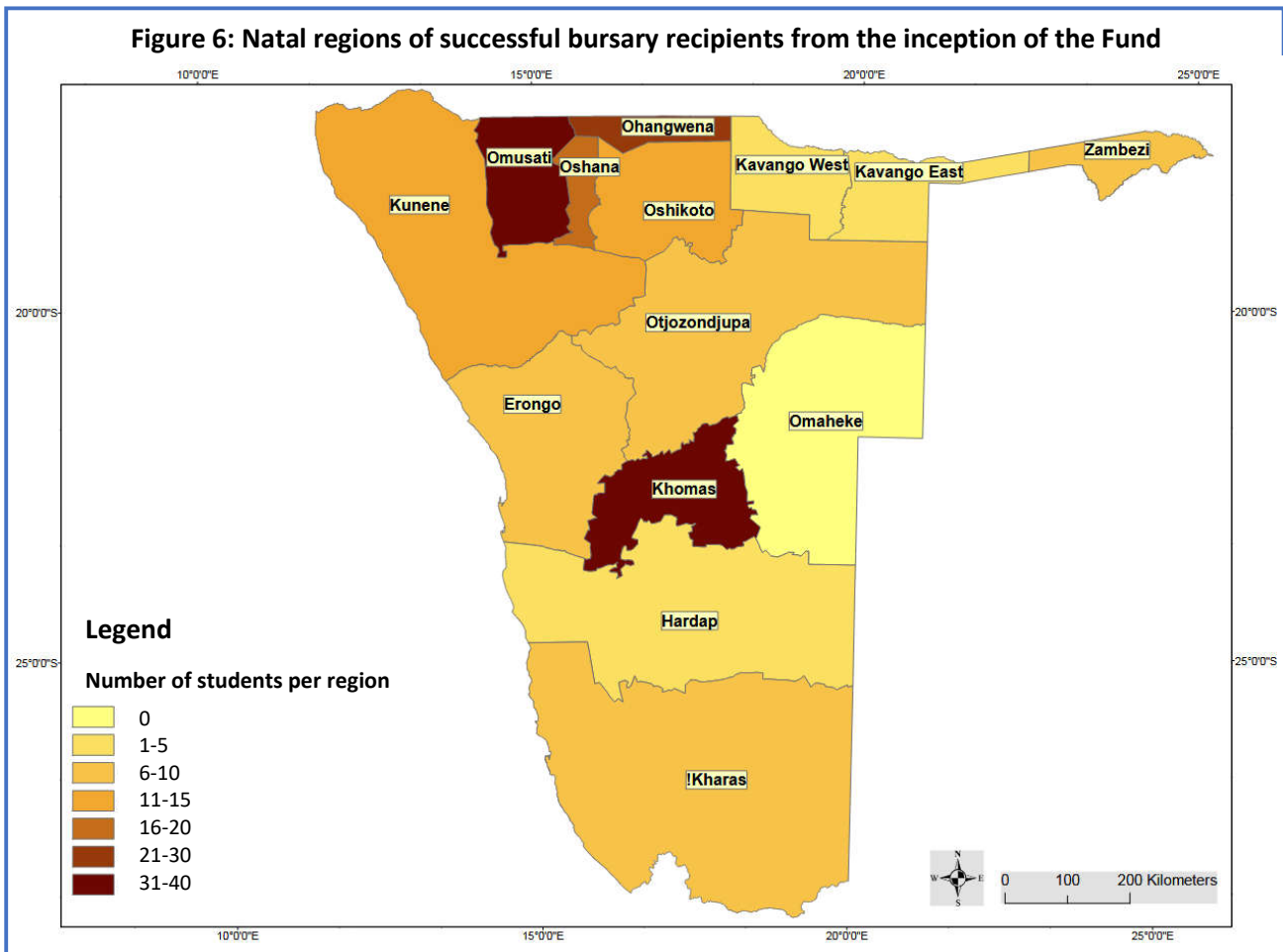


#### RECIPIENTS OF BURSARY SUPPORT

To date 63% of bursary recipients have been women. In the first two years of the Fund, about 80% were women. This declined to 63% in the next three years and declined further to 50% in 2023 (Figure 5). The shortlist of candidates for 2024 comprises 63% women. The selection process does not consider the sex of the candidates, these figures emerge solely on an evaluation of candidates against the criteria listed in the Background section of this report. The larger proportion of women receiving our bursaries is not an unwelcome outcome, as there are currently more men in the environmental workspace than women. This is particularly true for positions of management. Our bursaries will hopefully contribute to a better balance of men and women in the workplace and in managerial positions in the years ahead.

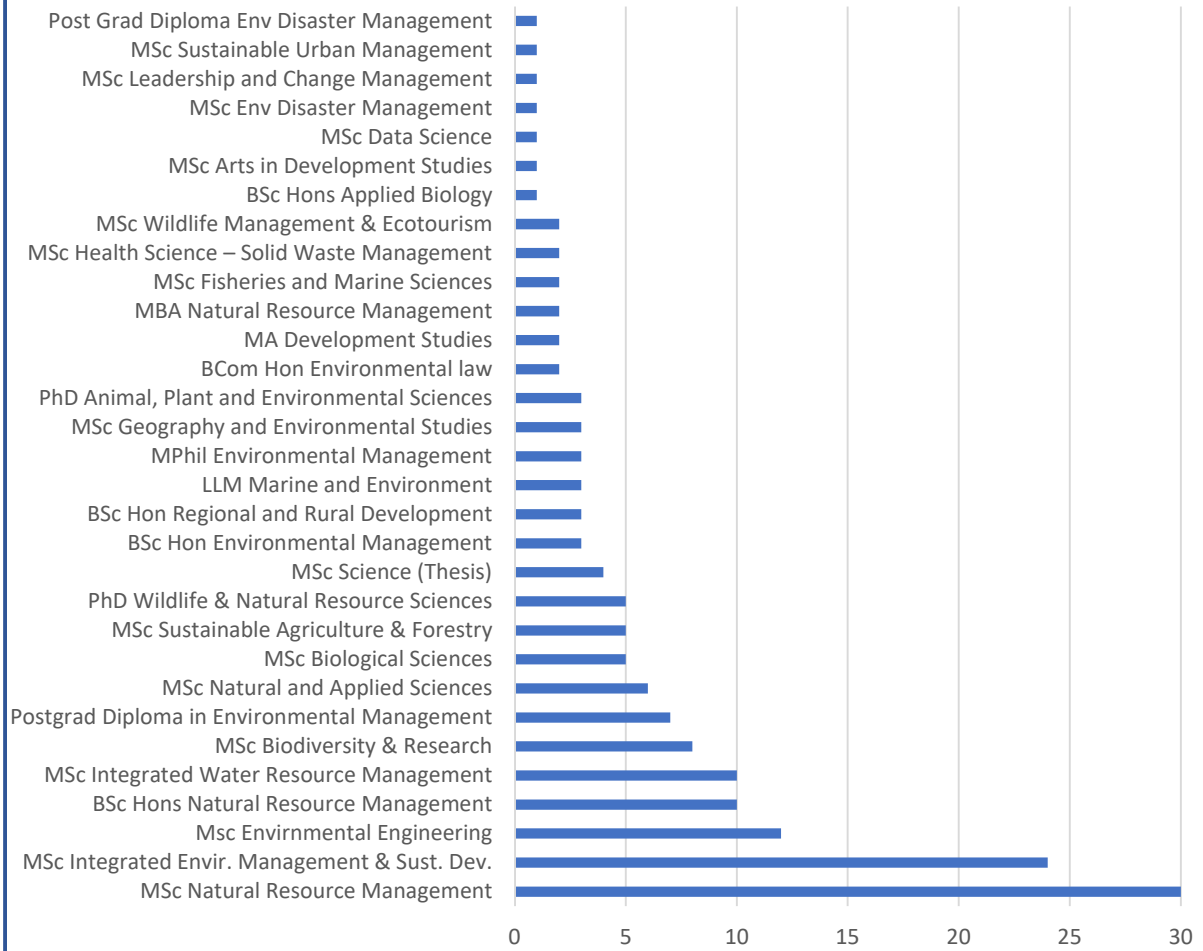


The regions from whence most bursary holders came are Khomas and Omusati (Figure 6), followed by two other north-central regions, Ohangwena and Oshana, and then Oshikoto and Kunene. This may reflect the importance placed on education in different regions, as well as access to, and quality of, school education. The Fund has supported students from all regions except Omaheke, despite efforts to find suitable students from this region. The shortlist of students for 2024 once again does not include a candidate from Omaheke.

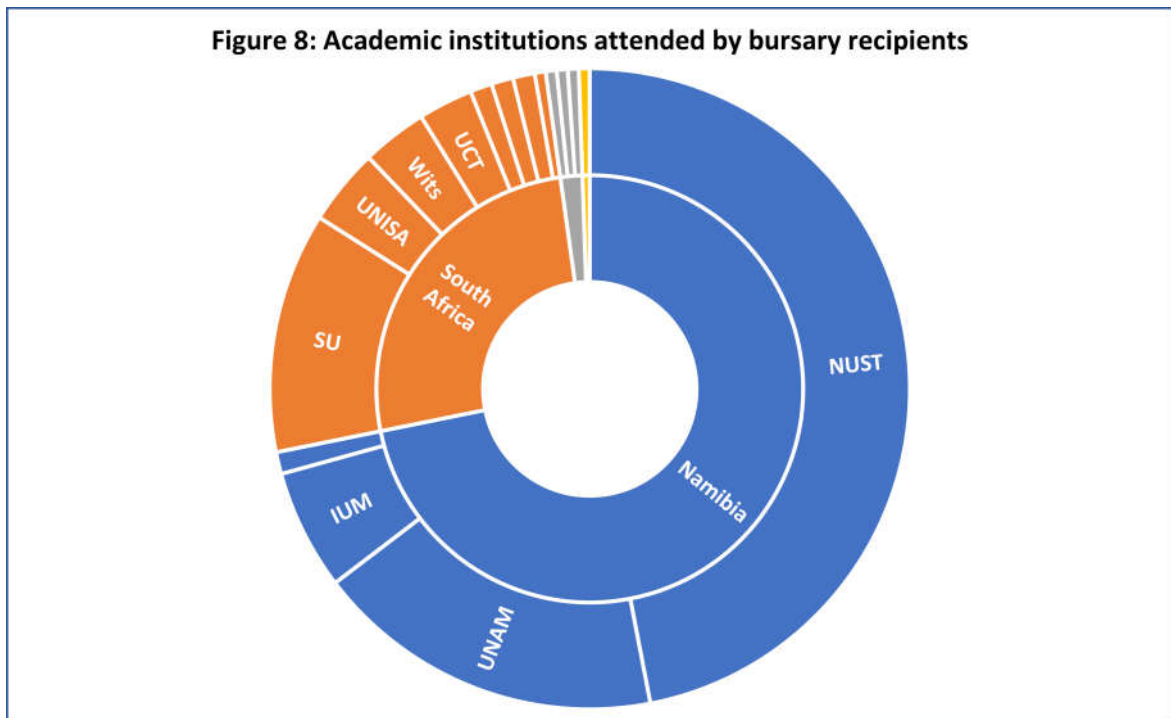


To date students have registered at 16 academic institutions for their studies. Of these, 72% have studied at Namibian institutions, 26% in South Africa, and 2% overseas, mainly in the UK. The most popular university was the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST) attracting 47% of the bursary students, followed by the University of Namibia (UNAM 18%) and Stellenbosch University (SU) in South Africa (12%). A new University has recently been established in Namibia, the International University of Management (IUM), which has introduced a range of attractive and accredited environmental courses. In 2022 and 2023, the first years in which IUM attracted our bursary students, 11% of our bursary recipients attended their courses. The shortlist of new potential students for 2024 has jumped to 28% applying to IUM.

**Figure 7: Number of bursaries awarded to post-graduate students in each of the 31 different degree courses since the start of the Bursary Fund**



**Figure 8: Academic institutions attended by bursary recipients**



## LOOKING AHEAD: 2024 AND 2025

In each of 2024 and 2025 we would like to support about 40-45 students. With the amount of support and follow-up we provide from the NCE, this number of students is about the maximum we can effectively manage. This required an annual investment of about N\$1. 5 million.

The Bursary Fund is working ever closer with Namibian institutions, government (Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism), universities (NUST and UNAM), and NGOs such as Ongava Research Centre and Gobabeb Research and Training Centre, to design bursaries to address priority conservation, management and research questions. These institutions provide strong mentorship and supervision. We are also working with overseas universities to facilitate good training and mentorship in areas in which Namibia is weak. Prof Brian Child at Florida University is engaged in a programme to develop skills at MSc and PhD levels in wildlife and environmental economics, and he has four potential students from our bursary programme under this supervision in 2024.

For 2024, the process of selecting candidates is well advanced. The Bursary Fund was advertised widely in September this year, with a closing date in mid-October. Some 285 applications were received. These have been assessed against the Fund's criteria and a shortlist of potential candidates has been prepared. The shortlist contains two parts, (i) existing bursary holders who are going into their second or third year of study on their MSc or PhD courses – comprising 14 students, and (ii) a new intake of students, comprising 28 potential candidates. Interviews with the new students is scheduled to take place in the week starting 4 December 2023. The students will be notified of the results by mid-December so that they can plan accordingly for the new academic year.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We are most grateful to all our donors for the amazing support you have given to the NCE and via the NCE to this Bursary Fund. It has made a huge difference to the lives of so many young Namibians from disadvantaged backgrounds. Their academic progress would not have been possible without this support. From a national perspective, the fund is targeting both highly motivated and high-performing candidates who have great potential for making meaningful contributions to conservation and wise use of natural resources at technical level and later in leadership positions. In years ahead they may well go into other sectors such as business and politics. Having environmentally literate and concerned leaders across society is a priority for the future of sound conservation and sustainable development in Namibia.

We thank the Bursary and Training Fund Board of Trustees, and the Executive Committee of the NCE, for their commitment and strong support. We hope that we will go into the next few years of this Bursary Fund with all our sponsors at our side.

**Chris Brown and Henriette Krohne – Frey**

November 2023

